RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Online Survey Findings

August 11, 2009

Cocker Fennessy, Inc.

Research Purpose

- Gather basic behavior, attitude and opinion data from Renton citizens. Specifically:
  - Library use and service opinions
  - Library service priorities
  - Key issues and benefits re: joining King County Library System (KCLS)
  - Information needed to make decisions about future library services
  - Communications patterns and preferences

Methodology

TIMING

- July 17th - online survey launched

- August 10th - survey closed

DISTRIBUTION

- E-mail invites from city, business & community partners

- City of Renton and KCLS websites

- Paper copies (Renton Public Library and Renton River Days)

Preliminary Report

- 888 responses were received between July 17, 2009 and August 10, 2009

- Results summarized in this report include 715 respondents who indicated they live within the targeted geography

- The survey sample is likely to represent those interested in the topic, not the general public
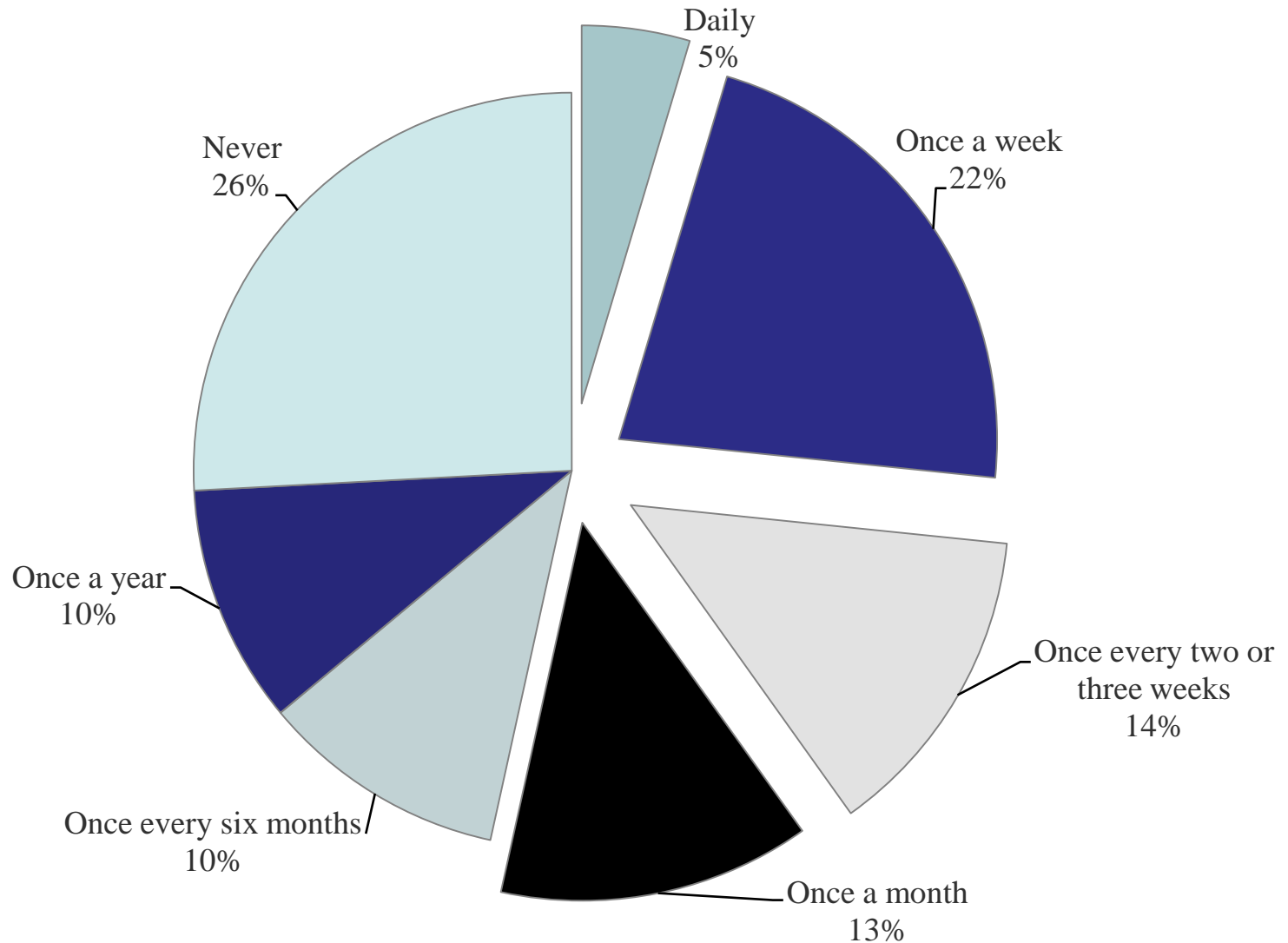
Findings Summary

Among survey respondents…

- Most are library users

- KCLS services are viewed very favorably

- Overall, a majority support joining KCLS but support differs significantly by subgroup

- There's a strong desire to maintain the library services and staff currently available to Renton residents

- Some would like to see expanded services (new libraries, services and materials) but there is not a strong expectation of expansion

- People want high quality service and good customer service. Other factors such as ensuring predictable costs and minimizing cost to taxpayers are also important, but less so.

- There is strong support for "modernization" of Renton's library system

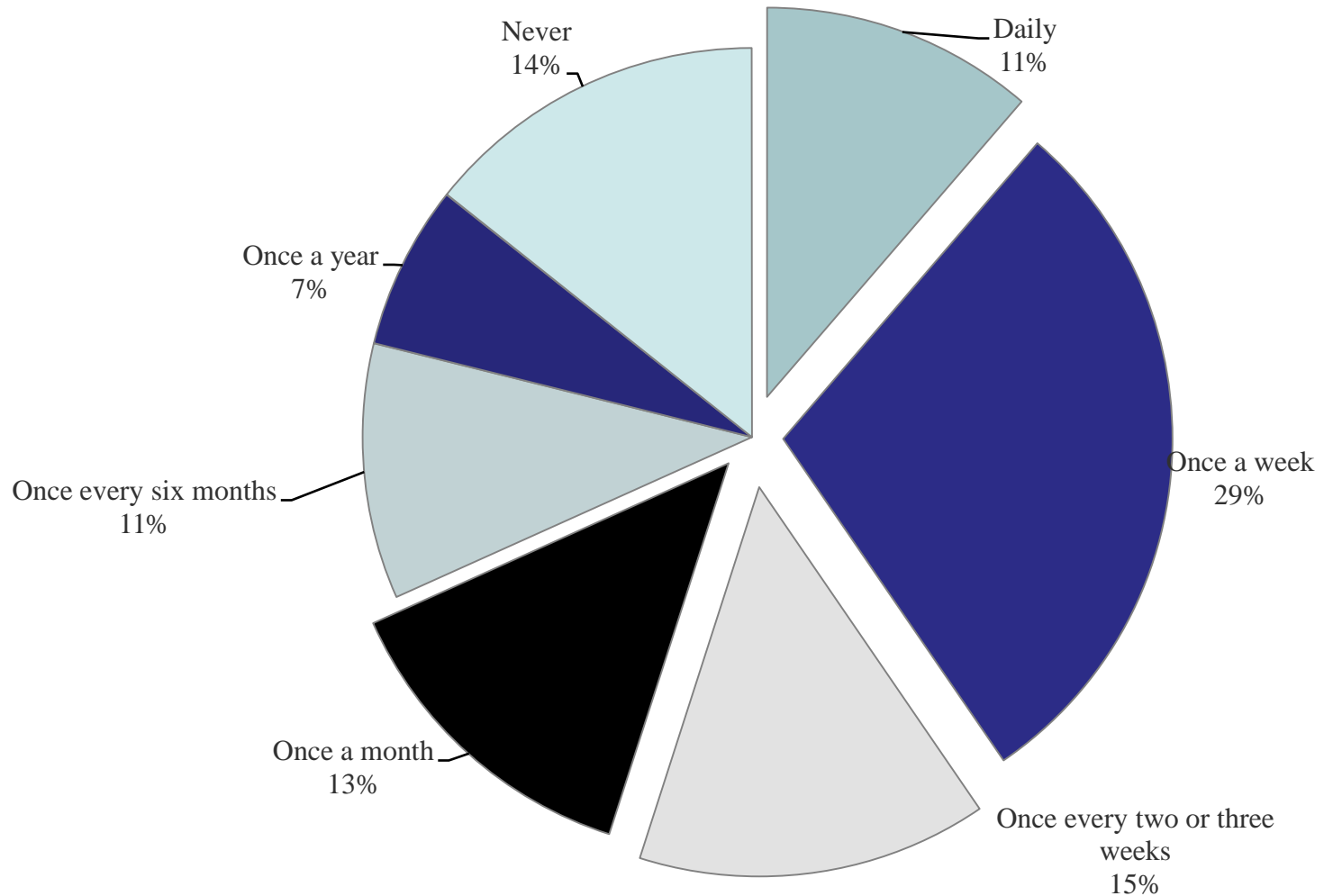- Few are interested in only having access to Renton Public Library system, without access to KCLS

More than half (54%) of respondents use the Renton Public Library once a month or more

*How often, if at all, do you use the Renton Public Library?*

Daily
5%

Once a week
22%

Once every two or
three weeks
14%

Once a month
13%

Once every six months
10%

Once a year
10%

Never
26%

N=713

Sixty-eight percent (68%) use the KCLS once a month or more

How often, if at all, do you use the King County Library System?

Never
14%

Daily
11%

Once a year
7%

Once a week
29%

Once every six months
11%

Once a month
13%

Once every two or three weeks
15%

n=705

Few use libraries other than KCLS or Renton Public Library

*Do you use any other libraries?*

Yes
27%

No
73%
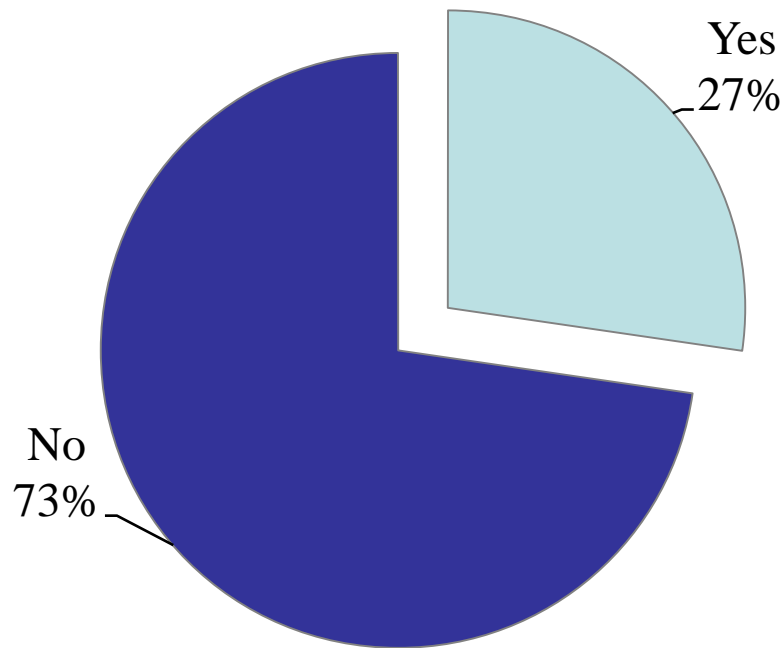
Other libraries used include:

- KCLS locations (77)*
- Seattle (36)
- University of Washington (14)

* Although the question asked people about use of libraries *other than* KCLS, many listed KCLS or specific KCLS locations.
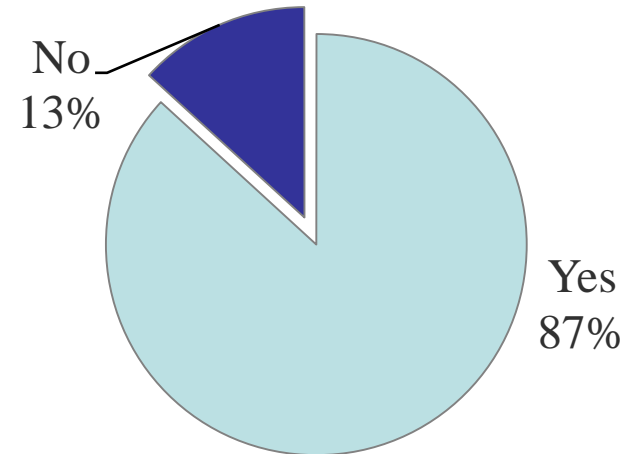
N=682

Most (97%) have a KCLS and/or a Renton Public Library card. Respondents are more likely to have a KCLS card.

Do you have a Renton Public Library card?
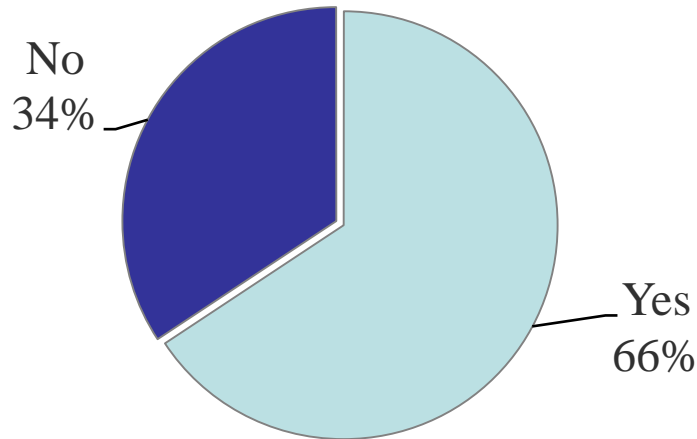
Do you have a King County Library System card?

No
34%

Yes
66%

n=715

No
13%

Yes
87%

n=713

- 53% have both a KCLS and a Renton Public Library card
- 3% do not have a Renton or a KCLS library card

A slight majority (58%) rate Renton Public Library's services favorably. Nearly 1 in 4 "don't know".

How would you rate the services provided by the Renton Public Library?
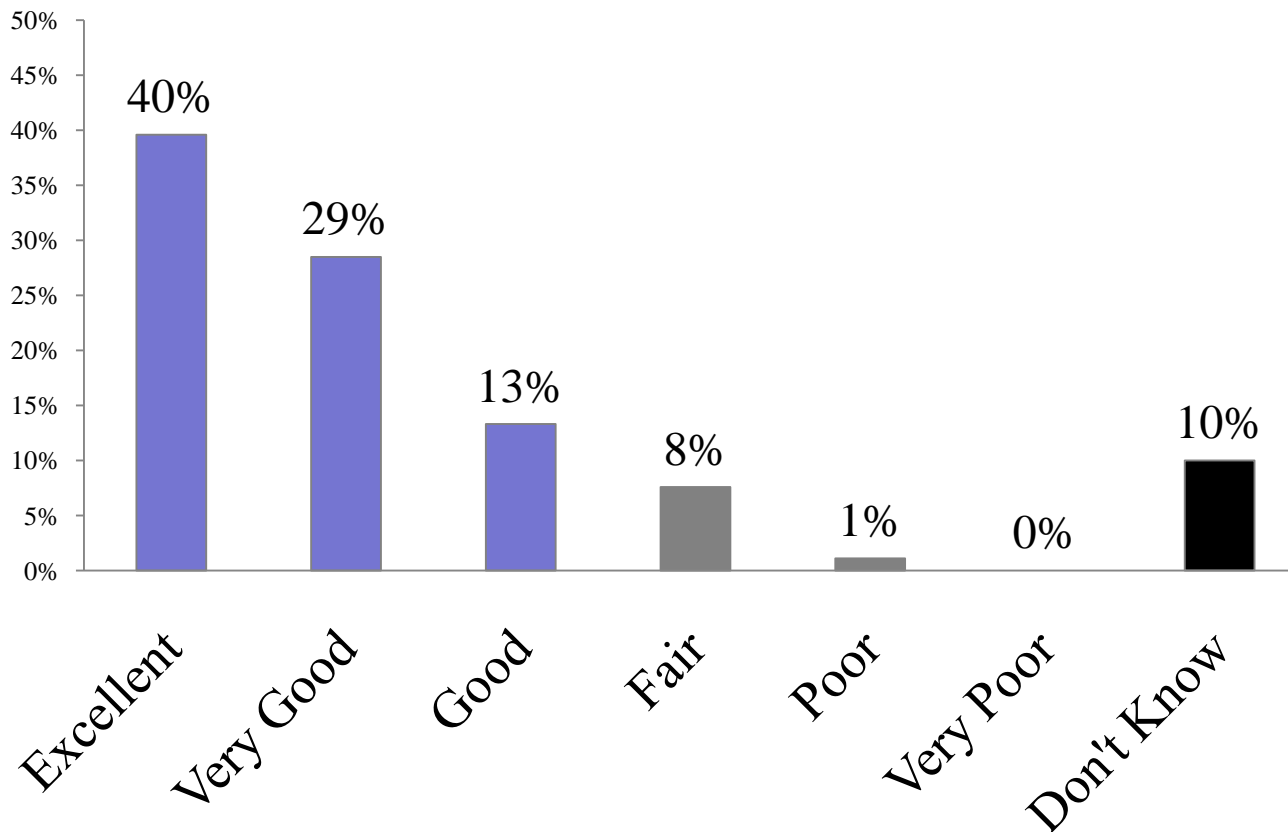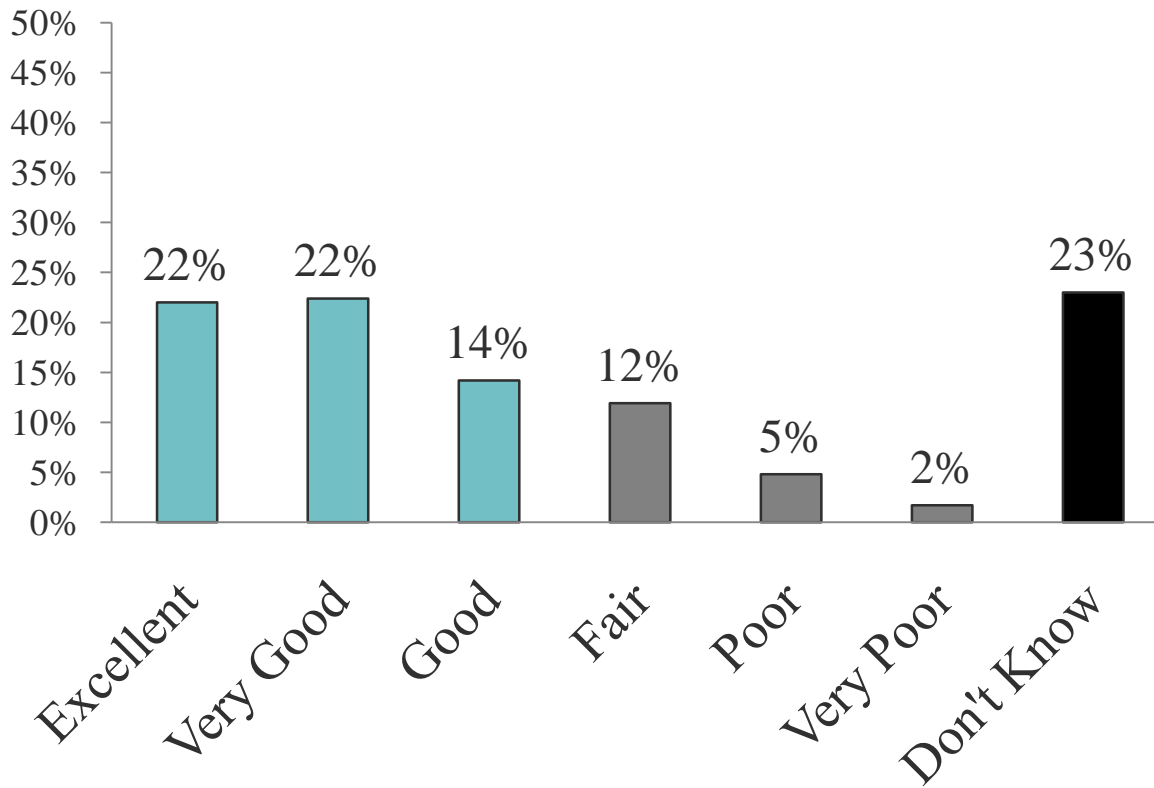
Comment themes

- Strengths
  - Helpful, excellent, friendly staff
  - Personal service
  - Community-feel
- Negatives
  - Collection (breadth)
  - Website
  - Facility/ building
  - "Outdated"

n=705

A majority of respondents used the Renton Public Library within the past year to borrow books

In the past year, have you used the Renton Public Library for any of the following services? (Select all that apply.)

Service	Percentage
Borrow books	61%
Borrow videos, CDs or audio tapes	38%
Haven't used library in past year/…	28%
Read books	27%
Use the children's library	27%
Read magazines	27%
Get tax forms	20%
Use the internet	18%
Study or work	16%
Read newspapers	16%
Use a computer	15%
Get information for a school project	11%
Attend programs	10%
Get government publications	9%
Hang out/ meet friends	9%
Job search/use career resources	8%

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n=690

There's a strong preference for maintaining services (particularly staff and facilities)

In today's challenging economy, the City of Renton will need to carefully consider which library services can be continued. Tell us which services you think should be cut, maintained or expanded.

Legend: ■ Expand ■ Maintain ■ Cut

Category	Expand	Maintain	Cut
Staff	12%	80%	9%
Facilities/ branches	19%	70%	11%
Hours	20%	67%	13%
Programs (storytimes, book discussions, teen activities)	17%	59%	24%
Buying new books or materials	34%	57%	9%
Public access computers/other technology	28%	56%	15%
Databases (genealogy, legal, business)	15%	51%	35%

n=673
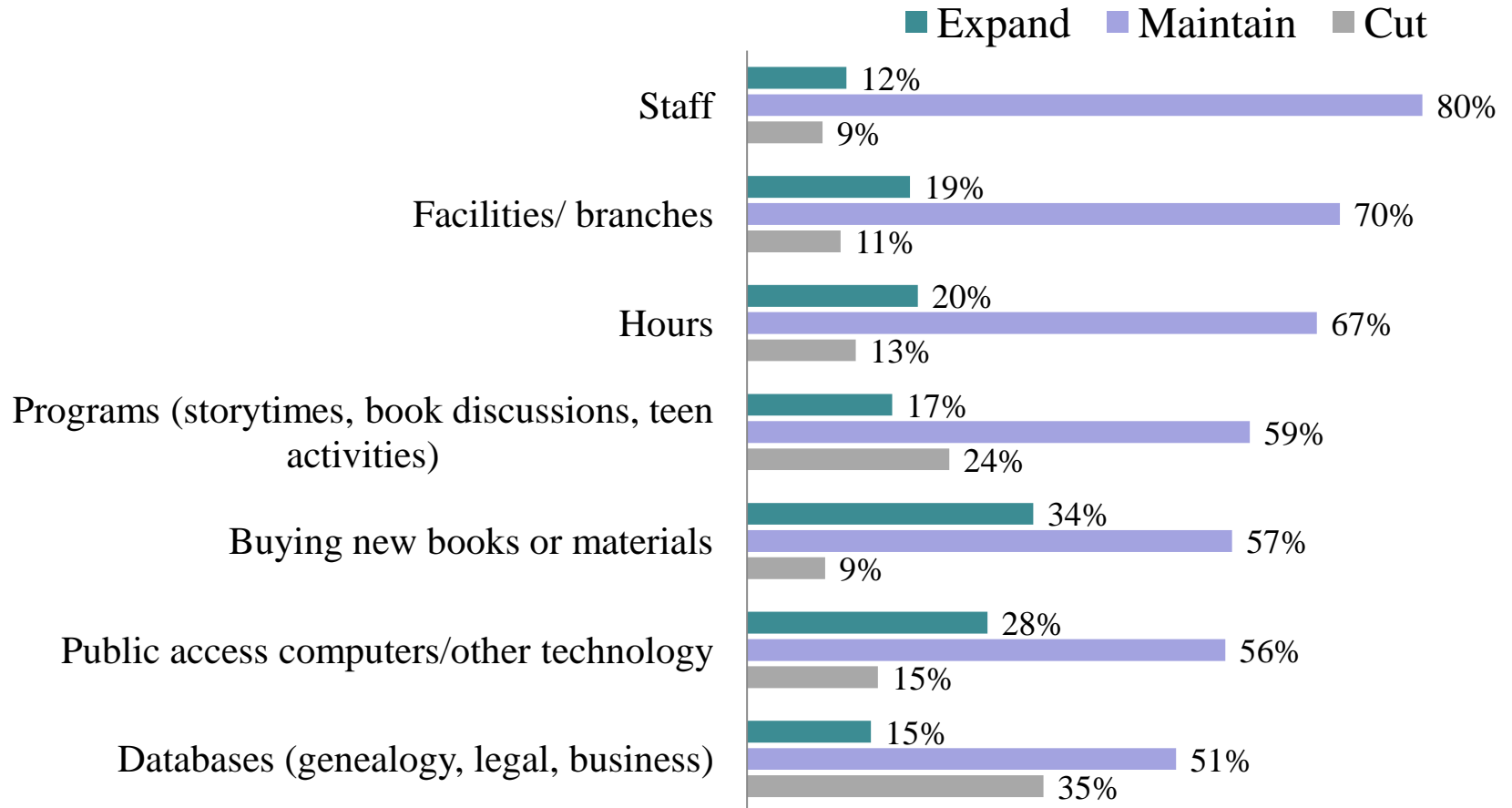
Respondents believe providing a high quality of service and good customer service should be top priorities

Sometimes cities partner with other units of government to provide services. This might be done to lower costs or to increase the level or quality of services. When the City of Renton makes decisions about services, how important are the following?

Legend: ■ Very Important ■ Important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important

COMBINED VERY IMPORTANT/ IMPORTANT

Providing a high quality of service
- 50%
- 44%
- 6%
- 1%

94%

Providing good customer-service
- 46%
- 46%
- 7%
- 1%

93%

Maintaining existing services
- 28%
- 53%
- 17%
- 3%

80%

Keeping costs predictable
- 22%
- 52%
- 24%
- 2%

74%

Keeping the cost to taxpayers low
- 22%
- 37%
- 38%
- 3%

60%

Expanding services
- 22%
- 32%
- 36%
- 10%

54%

Ensuring that services are locally-controlled
- 23%
- 31%
- 31%
- 16%

53%

n=702

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Respondents seem to be most interested in preserving existing services and minimizing the impact of any change on their daily life

"What other factors are important to consider when evaluating whether a service should be provided directly by the City of Renton or another entity?"
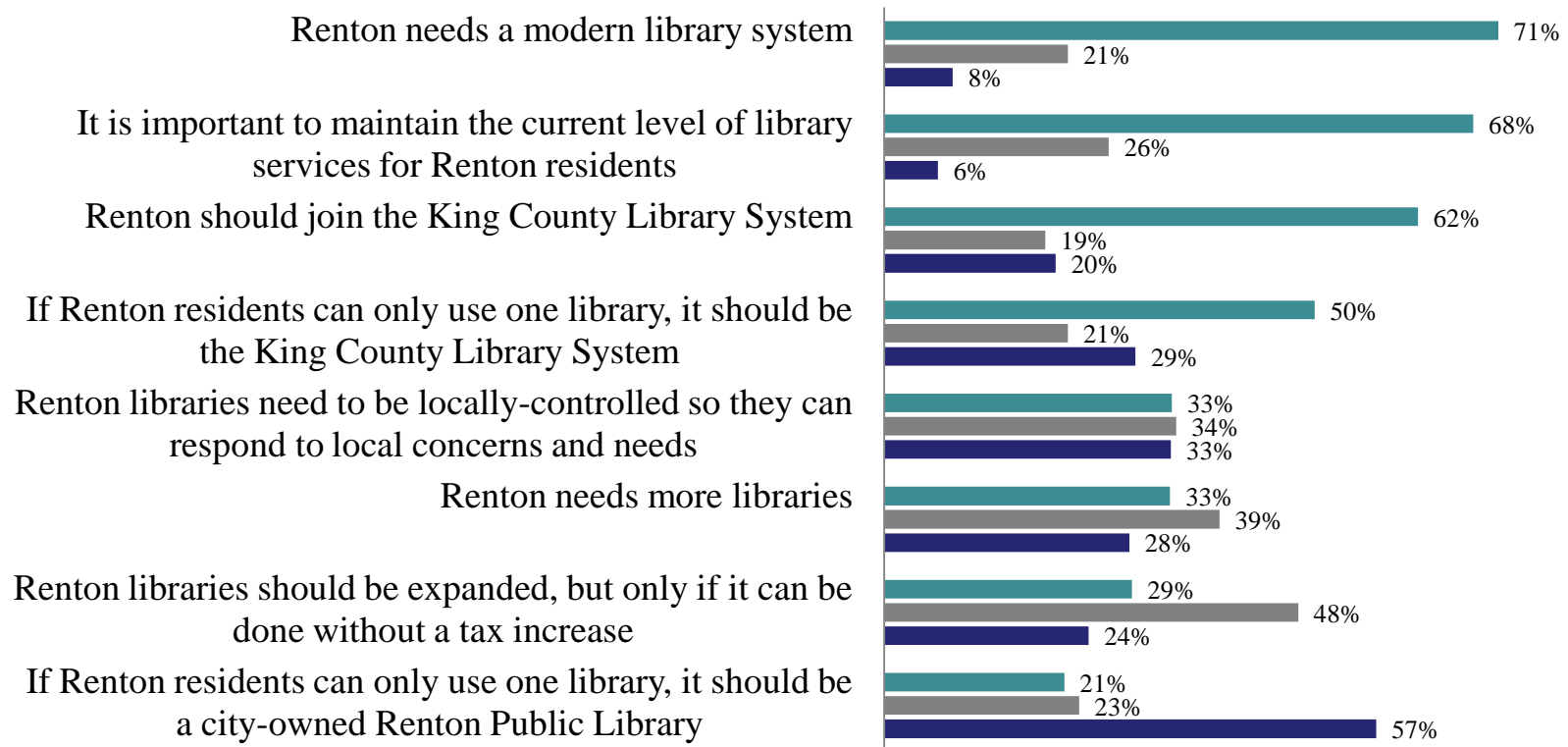
Comment themes:

- Few provided comments

- Most comments listed things people do while at the library (use databases, make copies, attend a book club, look at Salmon/ the River)

There's strong agreement that the Renton Library needs to be maintained and modernized, and there is general support for joining KCLS

Below are a series of statements about the future of Renton Public Library. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement…

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Renton needs a modern library system
- 71%
- 21%
- 8%

It is important to maintain the current level of library services for Renton residents
- 68%
- 26%
- 6%

Renton should join the King County Library System
- 62%
- 19%
- 20%

If Renton residents can only use one library, it should be the King County Library System
- 50%
- 21%
- 29%

Renton libraries need to be locally-controlled so they can respond to local concerns and needs
- 33%
- 34%
- 33%

Renton needs more libraries
- 33%
- 39%
- 28%

Renton libraries should be expanded, but only if it can be done without a tax increase
- 29%
- 48%
- 24%

If Renton residents can only use one library, it should be a city-owned Renton Public Library
- 21%
- 23%
- 57%

n=715

Additional information people want to know in order to decide whether to join KCLS

Open-ended comment themes:

- Service availability, quality, and accessibility

- Future of the Renton Public Library building

- Costs (financial and other)

- System sustainability and accountability

- Local control/independence

- Ability to meet needs of diverse population

- Community/ local specialization

Feelings about joining KCLS differ by sub-group

Likely to support joining KCLS

- Rate KCLS favorably
- Use KCLS once a week
- Have a KCLS card
- Never use Renton Public Library
- Do not have a Renton Public Library card
- "Don't know" the quality of services at Renton Public Library
- Are concerned about costs
- Would like to see expanded services
- Live in the northeast or southeast area
- Are ages 25-44
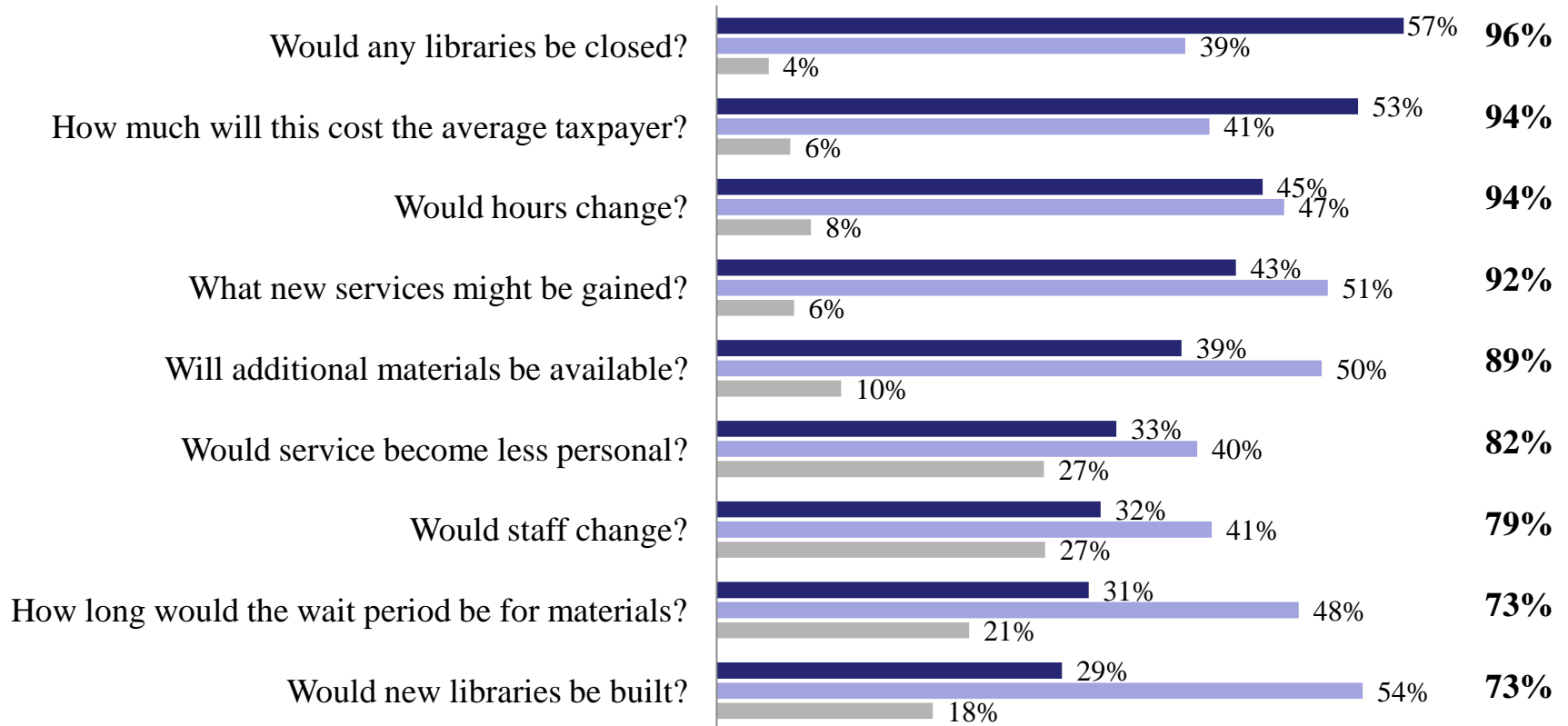
Unlikely to support joining KCLS

- Use Renton Public Library once a week
- Have a Renton Public Library card
- Rate KCLS as "fair"
- Have lived in the area more than 10 years
- Are concerned about local control
- Those in the central section of the surveyed area
- Are ages 35 and older

Respondents most want to know if joining KCLS will result in any library closures, the cost to taxpayers, and whether hours would change

The City of Renton may ask voters to decide whether to join KCLS. As a voter, what would you like to know in order to decide whether to join the KCLS?
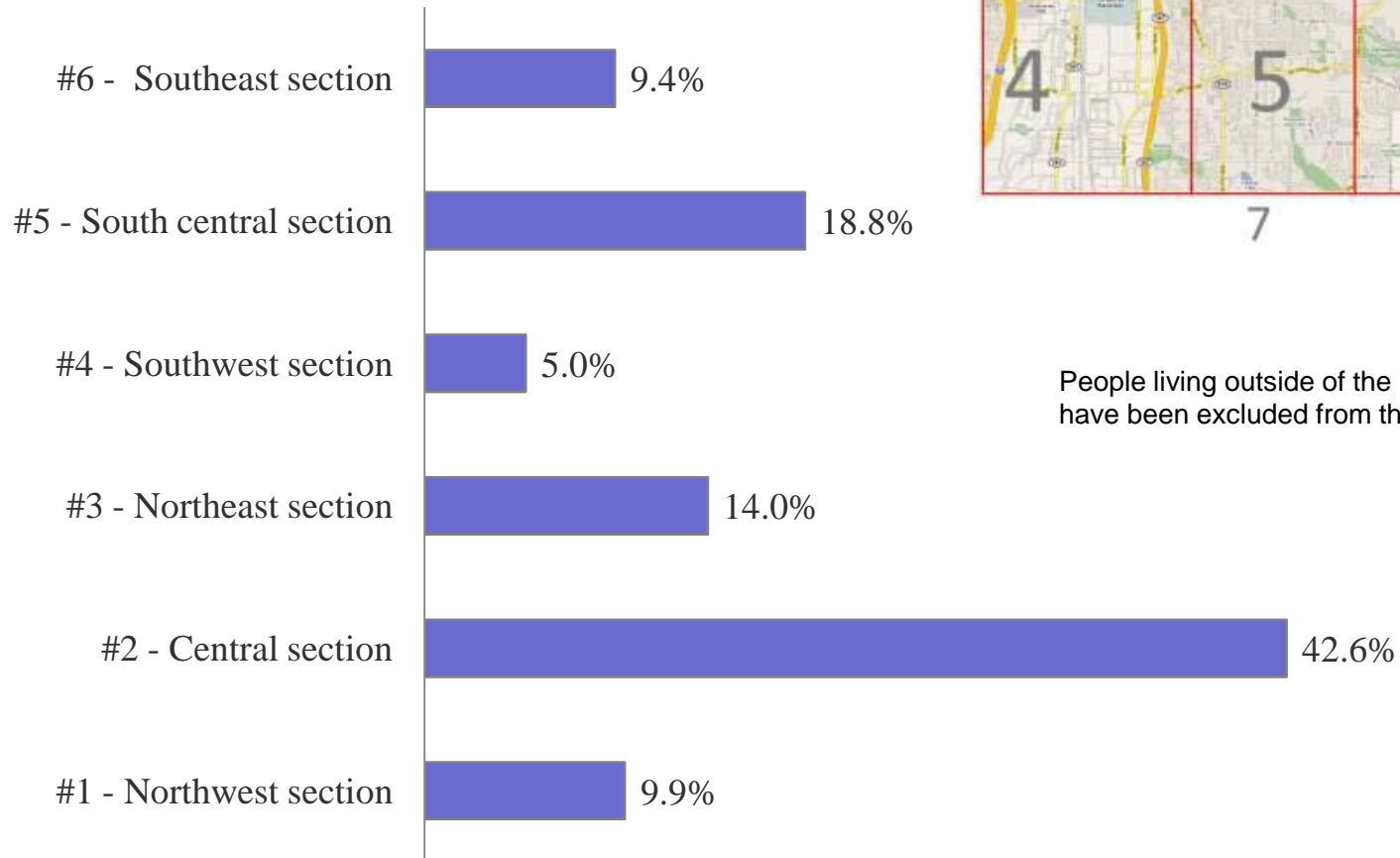
■ Need to know   ■ Would like to know   ■ Not important

Would like or need to know

Would any libraries be closed?
- 57%
- 39%
- 4%
96%

How much will this cost the average taxpayer?
- 53%
- 41%
- 6%
94%

Would hours change?
- 45%
- 47%
- 8%
94%

What new services might be gained?
- 43%
- 51%
- 6%
92%

Will additional materials be available?
- 39%
- 50%
- 10%
89%

Would service become less personal?
- 33%
- 40%
- 27%
82%

Would staff change?
- 32%
- 41%
- 27%
79%

How long would the wait period be for materials?
- 31%
- 48%
- 21%
73%

Would new libraries be built?
- 29%
- 54%
- 18%
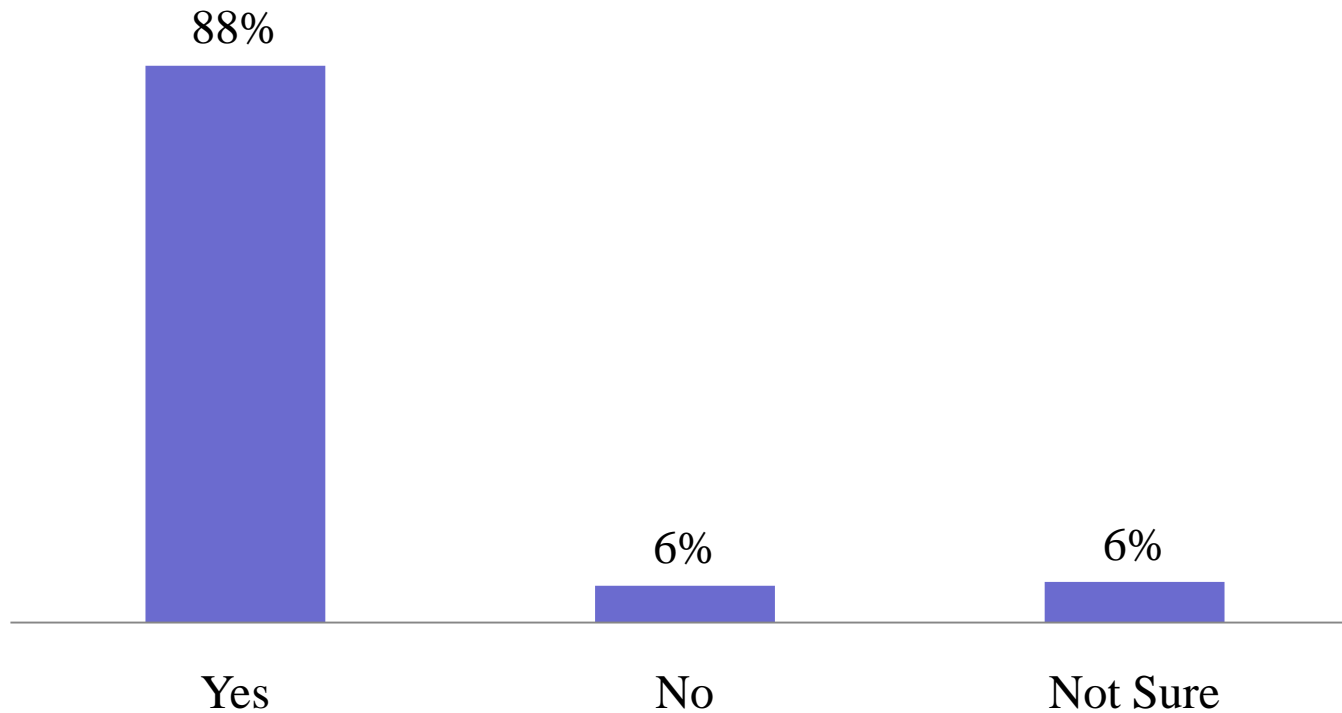**73%**

n=707

Residence

Using the map above, select the number that best corresponds with the area where you live:

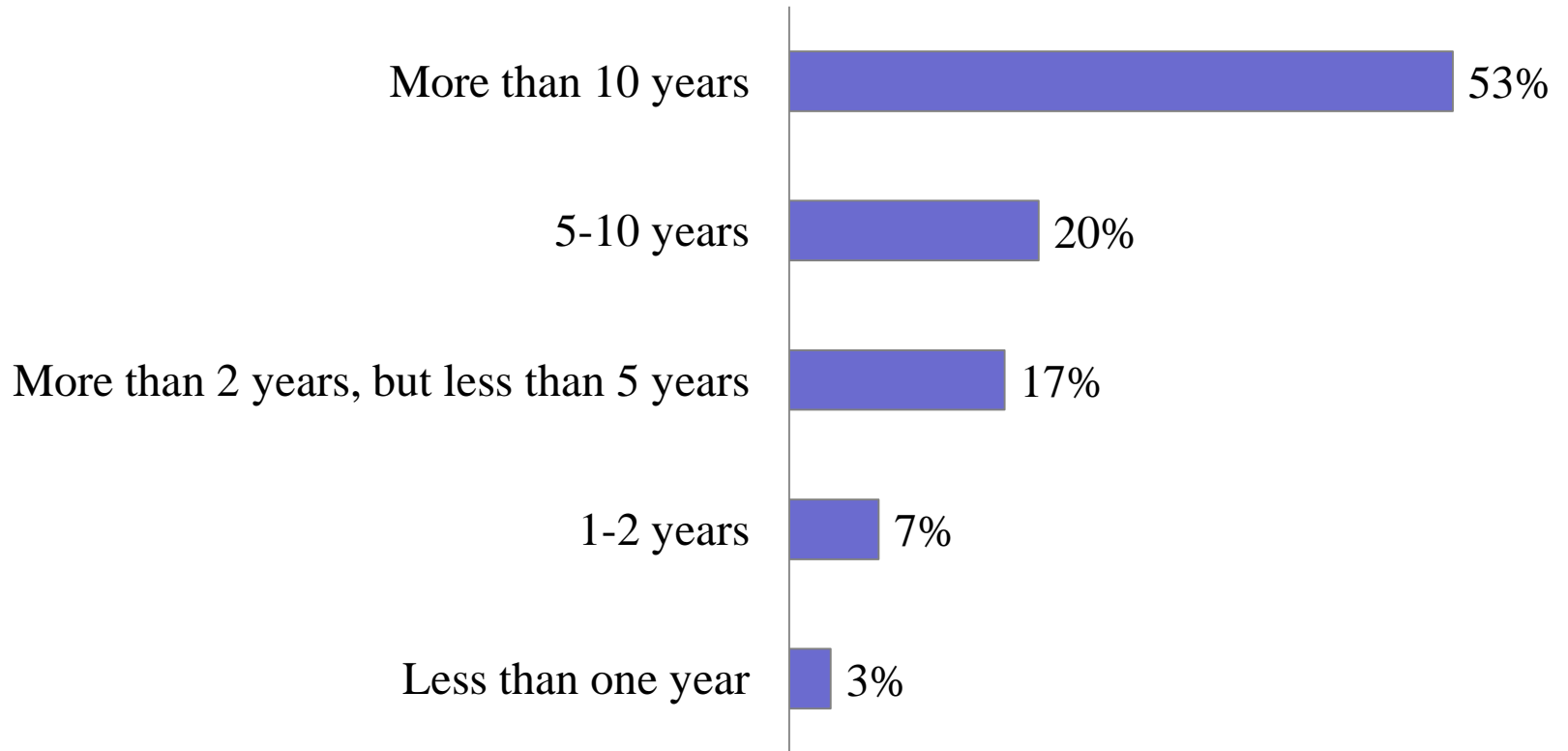People living outside of the mapped area have been excluded from this analysis

Section	Percentage
#6 - Southeast section	9.4%
#5 - South central section	18.8%
#4 - Southwest section	5.0%
#3 - Northeast section	14.0%
#2 - Central section	42.6%
#1 - Northwest section	9.9%

Most respondents consider themselves Renton residents

Do you consider yourself a Renton resident?

n=718

Most (73%) have lived in the area 5 or more years
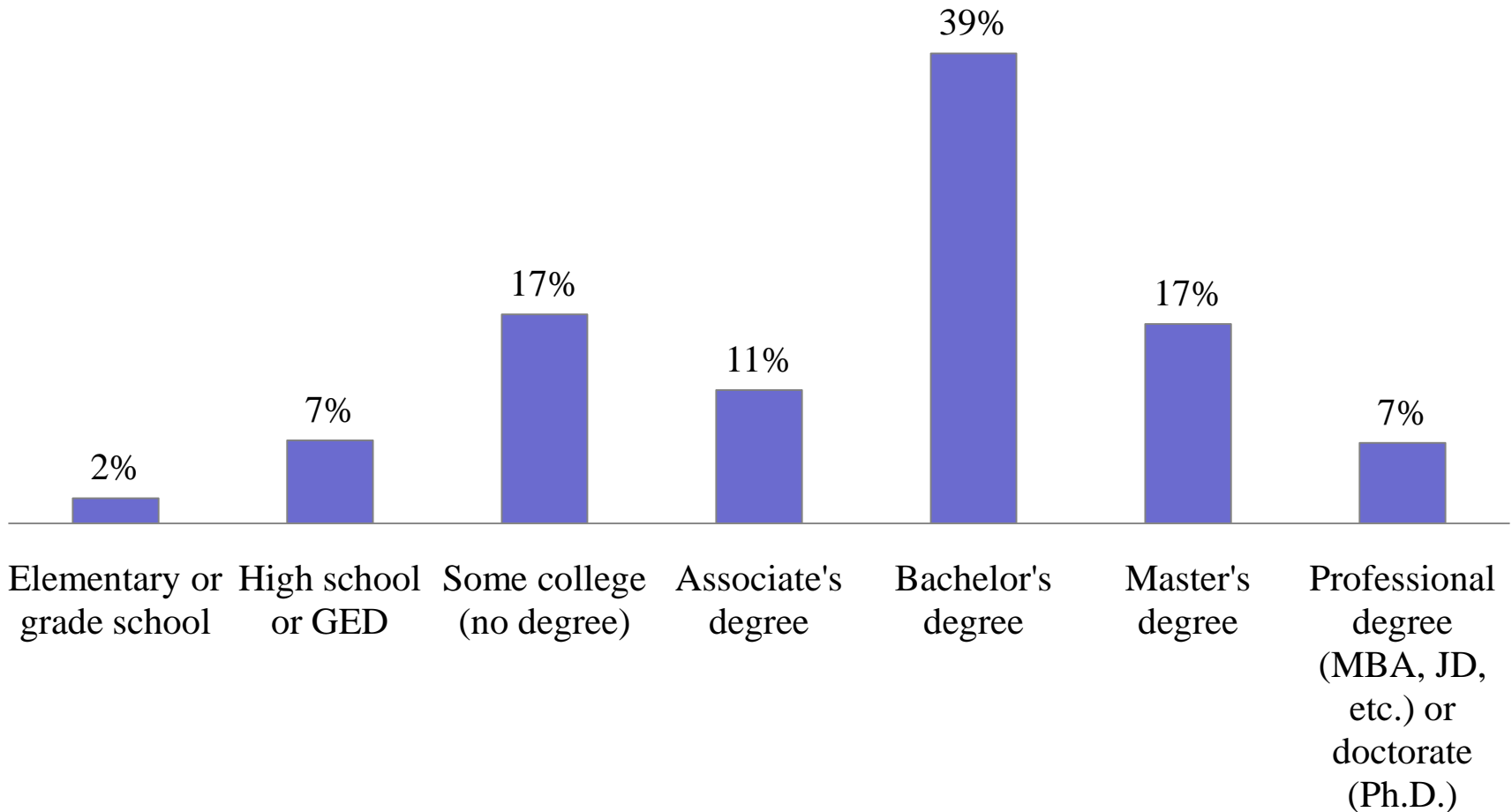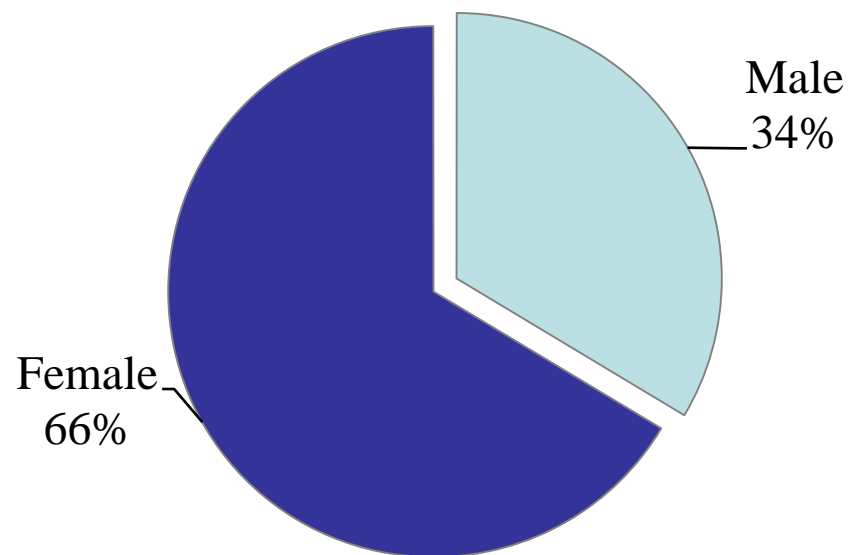
How long have you lived in the area?

- More than 10 years — 53%
- 5-10 years — 20%
- More than 2 years, but less than 5 years — 17%
- 1-2 years — 7%
- Less than one year — 3%

n=632

Age

65 years or older — 12%
55-64 years — 14%
45-54 years — 20%
35-44 years — 23%
25-34 years — 19%
19-24 years — 6%
18 years or younger — 5%

n=710

Gender

Male
34%

Female
66%

n=709
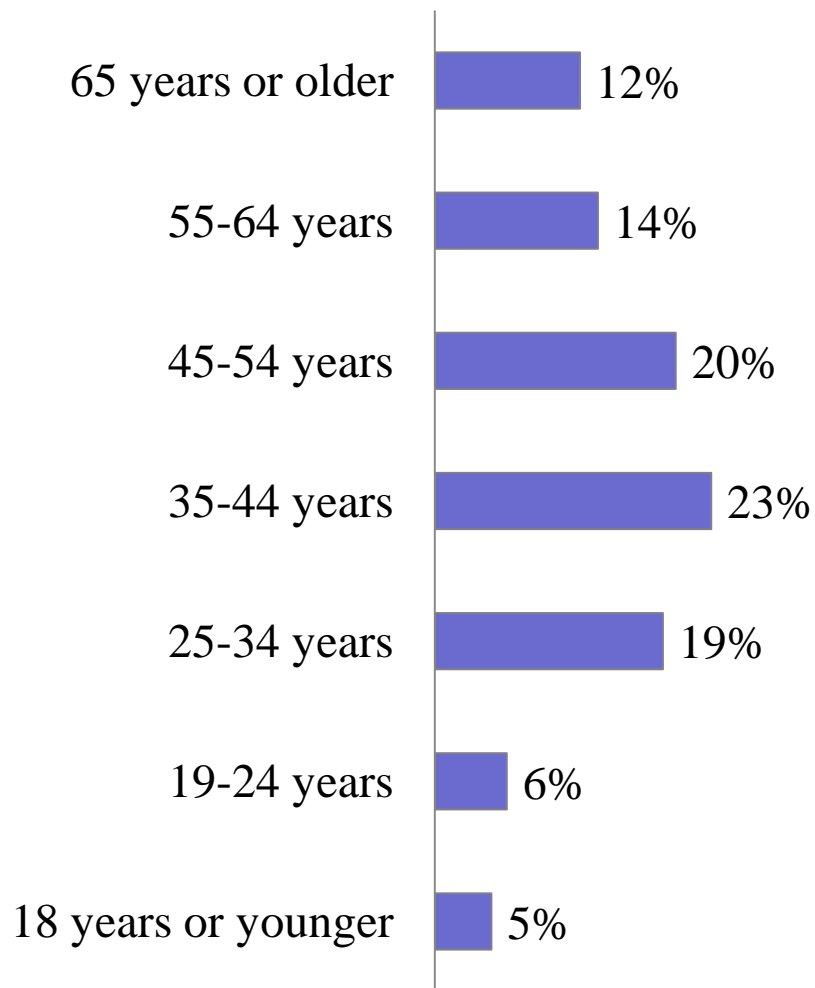
Children

Do you have children under the age of 21?

yes
36%

no
64%

n=702
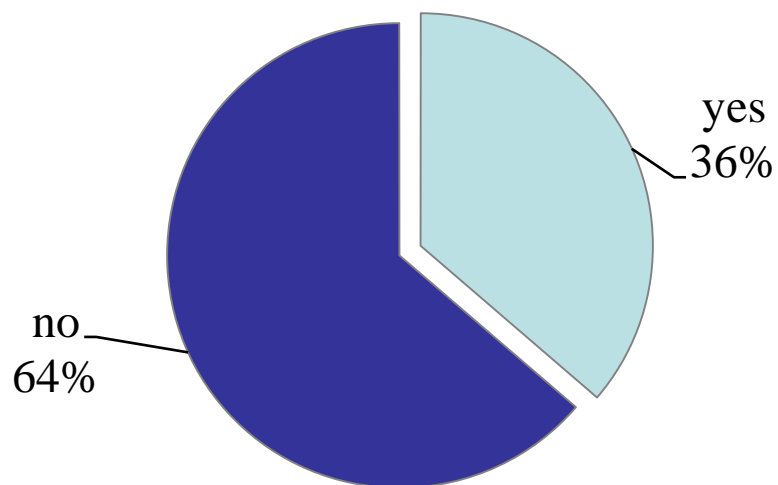
Preliminary communication recommendations

- Increase awareness of library services and challenges

- Explain that status quo is not an option. Change is required to maintain existing resources and services

- Outline local/community implications, including specifics about sites, buildings and resources

- Connect to core values: providing high quality service in a cost-effective manner

- Recognize diversity of users and interests

- Determine whether the message is "modernizing" or "maintaining"

- Personalize and localize messages and materials - provide concrete examples (e.g., wait time on a book, specific hours, etc.)

Next steps

- Develop key messages, fact sheet, FAQ and presentation summarizing situation and decision before voters

- Discuss outreach strategies for communicating information (websites, direct mail, community partnerships, social media, ongoing surveys, etc.)

- Develop a timeline for communicating information based on ballot measure timing, city and community issues and activities, etc.

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